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Abstract

This article puts into conversation Friedrich Nietzsche's perspectivism and a particular expression of "African animism," drawn from my ethnographic fieldwork in Ghana. Nietzsche's perspectivism extends interpretation beyond the human species into natural processes. Like perspectivism, African animism troubles the binaries—body/soul, nature/culture—that permeate anthropocentric thinking. Human-nonhuman relations are refigured as socio-ecological relations: the earth may be regarded as life-generating ancestors; baobab trees may approach humans as kin. These two images of the world intersect, but they do not mesh together. Nietzsche adopts perspectivism as active intersections between dynamic processes, within an open universe that has not been predesigned for humans. Animism tends toward a world of personalized relationships that would reach harmony if we would only lighten our ecological footprint. I draw upon such resonances to advance a new ethic of experiential environmentalism that treats ecological threats as lived risks and shared experiences with a lively and communicating "environment."

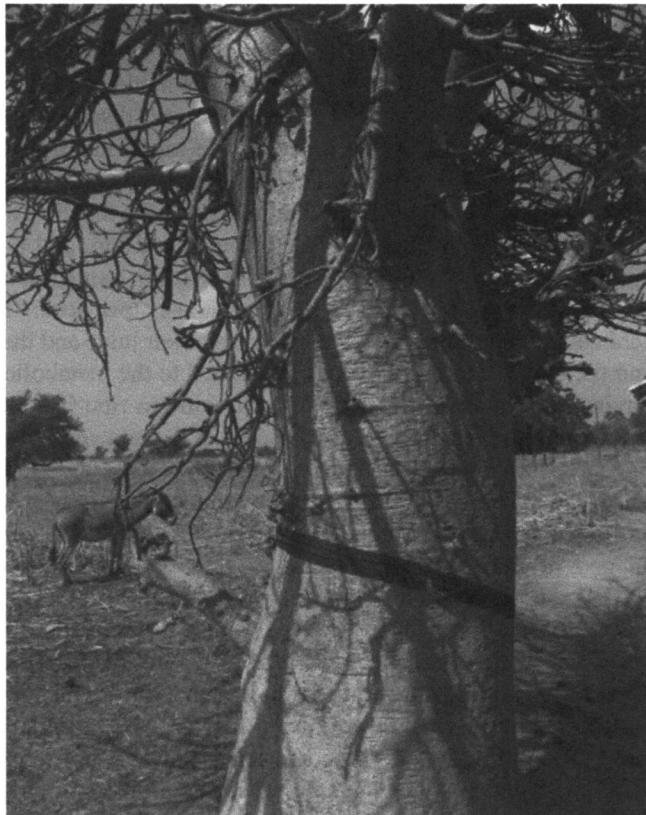
Keywords

African animism, environmental political theory, ethnography, giving environment, Nietzsche, perspectivism

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Ancestral tree (tingane). Image: author.

The elder led us to a lonely baobab tree by the entrance of the chief's compound in Northern Ghana. This tree, he explained, is one of the ancestors (*yaaba*). See the strip of cloth draped around the tree? The *yaaba* requested a smock as a gift for the tree's assistance and blessings. How does one know what the tree wants? By asking the soothsayer: "the tree is saying that you have to perform sacrifices to it. Give me a goat or a cow . . . give me a shirt or a smock. So you have to . . . You know, you cannot buy a big smock to put on so you have to give something that signifies that that is the smock."¹ When the Gurensi make such offerings, the ancestors tend, in return, to deliver prosperity, riches, children, and good harvests, for these practices are

part of an economy organized around gift exchanges between land, natural forces and objects, ancestors, and living humans. The tree gives to the farmers, the farmers to the earth priest (*tindaana*), and the earth priest to the *tingane*. The land's abundance and fertility reflect the moods and strategies of the *yaabas*: society is healthy when the *yaabas* are well-disposed.²

The Gurensi economy embodies a few of the intuitions of Nietzsche's Zarathustra. After a ten-year stay in the mountains, Zarathustra re-enters the human world in response to the crisis of nihilism and the inability of human beings to "overcome themselves." Full of love, friendship, and a spirit of gift-giving, he offers the world the overflow of wisdom gained in and from the mountains. He wants to share it with all, just as nature does: "like figs, these teachings fall to you, my friends: now drink their juice and their sweet flesh!" and the outflow of his teachings is adapted to the metabolic flow of the gift-giving earth.³ He is, indeed, a "north wind to ripe figs." Like the fertile womb of the Gurensi *tiqa* (earth), ripe figs contain seeds of wisdom and intergenerational change that the wind bestows upon the "fathers and forefathers of the overman."⁴ Zarathustra acts simultaneously as an ancestral and natural force. As "north wind" he impersonates Wotan, the continental Germanic god of madness, intoxication, vegetation, oracles, and secret knowledge. Wotan has only one eye and carries a spear. The other eye was given up at the base of the World Ash Tree so that Wotan could drink from the stream of wisdom and break a branch from the tree to make his spear.⁵ Wotan is the turbulent movement after a long standstill or tension: like the sea levels that rise and break loose after a century-long accumulation of greenhouse gases, Wotan's powers become manifest when things reach critical mass and cross a *threshold*.⁶ Thus Zarathustra's gifts are often gifts that mark a *passage* from one state of equilibrium to another and that bestow new identities.⁷ Like the Gurensi earth priest and soothsayer, Zarathustra straddles multiple worlds: he shifts back and forth between the perspectives of people, animals, plants, and natural forces.

Both Zarathustra and the African earth priest understand the earth as a turbulent, gift-giving ancestor (and not only a material context for human action), and both present sustainable living not as an amended "lifestyle" but as a web of long-term interactions with earth. The hope is that such cross-cultural encounters may transform both Western and African perspectives, diversify the resources available for contemporary environmental action, and illuminate the question of living well within the earth's means. This question looms large today as Zarathustra's most powerful companions—the eagle and the lion—struggle to rebound from the endangered species list and the Gurensi *tingana* are being fenced in to become sites of biodiversity conservation.

In contrast to both environmental managerial strategies aimed at resource efficiency and risk management and attempts to extend duties, rights, and obligations to nonhumans, Zarathustra and the Gurensi *tindaana* offer an ecological understanding that proceeds from the mutuality and sociability between people, animals, plants, and the land. Baobab trees and the savanna are human in the same way that dead ancestors are the living environment; people and environment are experienced as part of each other, and as enmeshed in a web of active, sometimes whimsical, agencies that they are obliged to interpret and negotiate together; humans do not work *on* or *against* the environment, but *with* it in continuous, albeit not always harmonious, intercourse.⁸ In such conversations, both Zarathustra and the *tindaana* acknowledge nonhuman beings as kin, adversaries, or allies who hold points of view worthy of respect and contestation.⁹

As I read them, Gurensi animism and Nietzschean perspectivism are two related forms of *experiential* environmentalism, in which humans receive ethical and practical cues from a lively and communicative “environment.”¹⁰ Climate change, deforestation, disease, and species loss become perceived not merely as ecological degradation, but as the erosion of cross-species relationships. A rupture in the body of nature implies a breakdown of ethical order; the sickness of an individual is symptomatic of the sickness of the world around him; human fertility is bound to the regenerative capacities of the earth. One of the proper tasks of this environmentalism is to find ways to intensify the human experience of interconnections between living and non-living beings and to sharpen our perception of the “messages” from the environment. For the Gurensi, this awareness of living within ecologies of beings—the communion of experience that lies at the heart of animist sociality—is the result of practical involvement with the plants, animals, and ancestors who cohabit the spaces of everyday life.¹¹ For Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, a self-conscious effort is required to forge a sensibility capable of discerning the presence of multiple degrees of agency distributed along a continuum of humans and nonhumans.

If animism and perspectivism are not only sets of beliefs but also modes of perception immanent to relations with earthen beings and forces, are they something that we do? If so, does that mean we can’t understand them unless we do them? My intuition is that the encounter between Zarathustra and the earth priest renders more perceptible subliminal aspects of what we have been doing all along. The encounter troubles the anthropocentric presumption that humans always have to speak on behalf of nonhumans, or that the latter always need the former to empower them to speak. For Nietzsche and the earth priest, human–environment interactions are less a question of translation or representation and more an issue of becoming attuned to ongoing

exchanges of interpretation and perspective. The earth is already speaking. Are we listening and responding appropriately? We don't generally think what human beings mean to the earth, plants, and animals or how the nonhuman world perceives us. If we take seriously the challenging idea that interpretation runs "both ways" and that the earth, plants, and animals keep sending us warnings, then perspectivism and animism together might provide a cross-cultural blueprint for responding to ecological problems: What if we understood hurricanes as if they were votes on corporate-driven energy policies? Or as the ancestors' enunciations of radical calls to political action and ethical reform? Do droughts constitute the earth's verdicts on degrading practices of modernization and development?

Before I proceed any further, let me address the recent criticism of works like this. I do not turn to non-Western animism in order to universalize Nietzsche or to extract ideas out of context in a manner that is disrespectful of the internal coherence of African traditions of thought. I draw Nietzsche into my ongoing conversation with African elders about the contemporary conjuncture of the Anthropocene in ways that require Nietzsche's thought to become transformed in partnership with the thought and practices of the elders themselves. I approach this conversation as a meeting of two traditions of political theorizing, rooted in the respective lifeworlds of the Gurensi people and Western theorists, and staged by my immersion in both. Together the performativity of Gurensi texts (such sacred groves and rituals) and Nietzsche's attentiveness to bodily practices and percepts prompt us to consider practices of theory that are less concept-centric and more open to attunements with the world. Such a practice becomes essential today because much of the liberal consensus of environmental political theory continues to privilege written texts and abstract concepts over oral traditions and situated knowledges. It frequently neglects already existing ethical ways of ecological life in favor of abstract theorizations of socio-political change that treat the earth as an object of conceptualization or a set of resources in jeopardy. I turn to African thought as a learner, rather than an expert, and take on various identities in the hope to deepen the ways, in which my subjectivity is neither "attached solely to one tradition, nor entirely an outsider to any."¹² This effort to inhabit multiple positionalities—*theorist, ethnographer, Westerner, activist, environmentalist*—may decenter some of the above perceptions of the earth, placing them in transformative relationships to previously neglected traditions of thought.

I am mindful that my reading of Zarathustra as an "animist" is against the grain. I explore how Zarathustra's cultivation of gift-giving virtue enables him to assume the perspective of the sun, which is always turned outwards and reaching out to the other. It allows him to amplify "the inflow," to digest it and to allow the outflow to be richer. As an ethnographer, I attended the

earth priest's libation and supplication to the *tingane* and became a participant in a ceremony that transformed him into a mouthpiece for the expressivity of the earth and the ancestors. My immersion in the world of African animism highlights that what Nietzsche advocates in the abstract is already a widespread practice, at least in parts of Ghana. Thus, the conversation between perspectivism and animism should not be understood as "recouping" Western philosophers, but instead as enriching the lifeworld of Western ecological theory and activism, within which I work and live.¹³

Within this lifeworld, there has been a revived interest in the practices and possibilities of animism. I expand on recent works in political theory—such as Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter*—which argue that everyday, material things, and the human–nonhuman assemblages they form, possess an agentic power of their own.¹⁴ I also draw political theory into an engagement with "new animist" approaches within socio-cultural anthropology. The latter eschew previous scholarly attempts to identify animism as either a metaphoric projection of human society onto nature, as in the sociological tradition of Emile Durkheim, or as a manifestation of "primitive" man's inability to distinguish dreams from reality, as in the anthropological tradition of Edward Tylor. Thinkers such as Philippe Descola, Nurit Bird-David, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Tim Ingold, Graham Harvey, Laura Rival, and Rane Willerslev have exposed and challenged the primacy of Western metaphysics over indigenous understandings, and attend instead to what animists themselves say about spirits, souls, and animals.¹⁵ Harvey, for instance, describes animism as practices of living well in the company of other persons, "not all of whom are human but all of whom are worthy of respect."¹⁶ Viveiros de Castro refuses to privilege the anthropologist's discourse over that of the Amerindian shaman and explores what happens if indigenous discourses operate *with* the discourse of the anthropologist in ways that produce reciprocal effects upon both.¹⁷

Both animism and perspectivism are more than systems of "beliefs" that some humans embrace in order to act *upon* the environment, for they are also immanent to the very activity of forming relationships with other forces and beings. They become insinuated into beliefs. Both Zarathustra and the Gurensi earth priest seeks to engage the forces of earth by building and maintaining relationships with them through conversation, quarrel, exchange, and a continuous process of investing and dis-investing with gifts bearing new perspectives and identities. Let's start with Nietzsche's perspectivism.

Nietzsche's Perspectivism

For Nietzsche, the entire world, and not only humans, is engaged in interpretation:

Physicists believe in a “true world” in their own fashion, a firm systematization of atoms in necessary motion, the same for all beings. . . . But they are in error. The atom they posit is inferred according to the logic of perspectivism of consciousness and is therefore a subjective fiction. This world picture that they sketch differs in no essential way from the subjective world picture: it is only construed with more extended senses [with microscopes, etc.] but with *our* senses nonetheless—And in any case they left something out of the constellation without knowing it: precisely this necessary perspectivism by virtue of which every center of force—and not only man—construes all the rest of the world from its own viewpoint, i.e., measures, feels, forms, according to its own force.¹⁸

Perspectivism involves an intensified sensitivity to specificity. It is bound to our sensory participation in a world composed of multiple forces with differential degrees of experience; these forces interpret the environment upon which they act. Perspectivism is thus inherently ecological: it requires us to experience ourselves as one mode of interpretation among others interacting to foment a world that exceeds all.¹⁹ Humans are not the pinnacle of existence, but rather an outgrowth of the creative flux of organic life, one vector through which life proliferates.²⁰

In Nietzsche’s lexicon, life is “not the adaptation of inner circumstances to outer ones, but will to power, which, working from within, incorporates and subdues more and more of that which is ‘outside.’”²¹ To say that life is “will to power” is not to assert a theme of human domination over other humans and mastery over nature. It is to advance a conception of life as affirmation and upsurge. Interpretation always takes place within a field of forces exercised against other forces. The will is the differential aspect of force that affirms itself not in self-identity but in difference: “there must be present something that wants to grow and interprets the value of whatever else wants to grow.”²² Life cannot be conceived in and for itself, but only in contention with lives and powers of multiple types. It is not an inner principle of unity emerging from a transcendental ego, but instead a force that marks a difference within a field of forces: “it is affected by the forces of that field, and it exists due to them as much as due to itself. Its sensitivity yields its activity, its power, and its Will to Power makes it sensitive.”²³ It is this pathos of distance—the feeling of connection and distinction—that is the fundamental affect of power.²⁴

If power is always will to more power and growth, then each mode of interpretation exists not in self-identical being but rather in the transformation and discharge of force (i.e. in the surpassing of itself in dynamic engagements with other forces, some of which are in affinity with it and others in opposition). Nietzsche’s perspectivism extends the inter-human subjectivity

through which we engage the rest of the world: different modes of subjectivity extend from natural and cosmic processes to humanity. Subjectivity finds differential degrees of expression in nonhuman processes and forces that are entangled with cultural and social forces. No single perspective can exhaust the abundance of reality: “There are many kinds of eyes. Even the sphinx has eyes—and consequently there are many kinds of ‘truths,’ and consequently there is no truth.”²⁵ Once human beings are situated within a larger web of socio-ecological processes, the perspective of each is revealed to be finite and tangled with other perspectives.²⁶ To the extent to which a perspective refers to a specific way of organizing reality according to the needs and will of a particular form of life, existence reveals itself according to a plurality of viewpoints. Thus, Nietzsche’s perspectivism effectively troubles the metaphysical presumption that *human* subjectivity dominates the totality of existence. For Nietzsche, perspectivism does not mean that appearances are profiles of an essential cultural variant. There is no essence—soul, spirit, or innate intentionality identical to human consciousness—to be sought behind the differentiation of appearances. If interpreting is understood as the upsurge of life and perspectives as powers that generate other perspectives by continual differentiation, then it follows that there are no pre-given persons, selves, egos, subjects, or facts. There are multiple interpretations and interpretations of interpretations:

The “subject” is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is.—Finally, is it necessary to posit an interpreter behind the interpretation? Even this is invention, hypothesis. In so far as the word “knowledge” has any meaning, the world is knowable; but it is *interpretable* otherwise, it has no meaning behind it, but countless meanings.—“Perspectivism”²⁷

The human self or the subject as metaphysical unity, says Nietzsche, is a fiction: “there is no ‘being’ behind doing, effecting, becoming; ‘the doer’ is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything.”²⁸ What there *is* is the body as a multiplicity of interacting, purposive forces; a chaos amidst which arises a commanding force that comes to impose a perspective.²⁹ The body, as an organization of competing or coexisting drives/wills, tends to interpret itself as a unity each time one will or another attains temporary dominion. All life interprets and orders whatever it encounters into different sets of relations according to its own needs. The organism itself is a product of multiple wills interpreting and organizing one another. Each mode of interpretation can be seen as a function of the particular order of searching drives and relations of which a body is composed.

As the locus of perspectives, the body is *a bundle of affects and capacities* or ways of being that constitute an interpretive habitus. It is thus important to attend to what the body eats, how it grows and moves, how it communicates, how it inhabits. It is bodies that interpret and determine what is interpreted.³⁰ Interpretations can be described as actions, or more accurately, as interactions and exchanges between bodies that also express wills and drive-trajectories. In Nietzsche, perspectivism is often synonymous with interpretation, imparting a recognition of bodies as essentially hermeneutical. *Physis*, the incessant unfolding of new and divergent interpretations is also continual *logos* and assembling of bodies that interpret.³¹

African Animism and the Exchange of Gifts and Interpretations

Like Nietzsche's perspectivism, African animism troubles boundaries and binaries—body/soul, nature/culture, and human/nonhuman—that permeate anthropocentric thinking. Animals, plants, and ordinary objects are endowed with capacities that Euro-American rationality identifies exclusively with humans. According to Harry Garuba, the most important characteristic of animist thought—in contrast to the major monotheistic religions and Western philosophical traditions—is its almost total refusal to allow for “unlocalized, unembodied, and unphysicalized” gods and spirits:

Animism is often simply seen as belief in objects such as stones or trees or rivers for the simple reason that animist gods and spirits are *located* and *embodied* in objects: the objects are the physical and material manifestations of the gods and spirits. Instead of erecting graven images to symbolize the spiritual being, animist thought spiritualizes the object world, thereby giving the spirit a local habitation . . . nature and its objects are endowed with a spiritual life both simultaneous and coterminous with their natural properties.³²

Amidst the grassy landscape of the Northern Ghanaian savanna, for example, certain baobab trees, groves, streams, and rocky ranges are identified as the dwellings of the earth Gods (*tingana*) of the Gurensi people. A *tingane* usually marks the location of settlement of the first ancestor—the pioneer settler and key ancestor of a village—or a powerful place identified by a soothsayer. The areas identified by the “original” settlers as places of sacrifice to the earth gods become abodes for the spirits of the whole community (*tinkugere*). Unlike the gods of Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, the earth gods are physical or immanent and historical. Their close ties to specific clan and family genealogies make it impossible for them to escape the history of the social worlds in which they participate.

African animism is not a narcissistic projection of human sociality onto nature but rather a buoyant multiplicity of coexisting “interpretations,” in the Nietzschean sense. Human–nonhuman relations are refigured as *socio-ecological* relations: the earth may be regarded by a Gurensi community as life-generating ancestors (*yaabas*); baobab trees and crocodiles may approach and, in turn, be approached by clan members as kin and blood relatives; plants, air, and water may act as the chief of medicine’s (*bagenabaso*) key associates and vultures as his guardians.

Gift exchange can be also understood as an exchange of perspectives. Interpretations always encounter counter-interpretations: to see the ancestral potency of the land as being revealed in an abundant harvest becomes simultaneously an interpretation of the concatenation of certain events and evidence that one is also the recipient of ancestral attention.³³ What to living humans is blood is food to the earth gods; what to the living is a grave for the dead or a fertile womb of a woman becomes an ancestral residence.

The differences between viewpoints express the specificity of different bodies. When humans lose their bodies, as in death, they cease to appear as human beings to others. Instead, they may return to live with their kin as baobab trees, pythons, or crocodiles. Animals, trees, and spirits interpret just as living people do, but without the same type of body they perceive differently. As a deceased elder, the ancestral baobab tree must be approached appropriately. The tree receives the blood and feathers of a sacrificed animal rather than its meat. It is draped in a strip of cloth rather than in a full-size smock. In both cases, his arboreal body would not allow the *yaaba* to eat the meat or wear the smock as the living would do. Although a son’s relationship with a deceased father or grandfather continues, the method of interaction becomes different when the latter is dead.³⁴ When the *tindaana* performs a sacrifice, this is not merely a matter of knowledge or a matter of shifting perspectives in the sense of putting oneself mentally in another’s shoes. In order to straddle coexisting worlds, the *tindaana* (earth priest) has to don animal skins (*tankoloos*), a calabash cap (*bagere wula*), a goat’s skin handbag (*talanya*), a black triangular loin-cloth (*lebere*), a knife (*sua*), and a walking stick (*tindaan-doore*) cut from the stock of a guinea-corn plant or okro plant. He has to activate the powers of a different body. The skins are borrowed bodies endowed with affects and capacities to transform the identity of those who wear them.³⁵

In a similar way to the earth priest who enlists the assistance of animal and plant bodies other than his own, Zarathustra has to reach beyond his body in order to shift perspectives between humans and nonhumans. Such exchangeability of perspectives and body metamorphoses enable Zarathustra to pursue an ethic of living that remains true to “the meaning of the earth.”³⁶ Zarathustra

shows that to think ecologically means not only to think about nature in a certain way but to allow thinking to unfold and play itself out in the materiality of the earth. The earth is the body and the milieu, in which the animal “human being” transforms corporally and learns how to experience herself as terrestrial: “It is time that mankind set themselves a goal. It is time that mankind plant the seed of their highest hope. Their soil is still rich enough for this. But one day this soil will be poor and tame, and no tall tree will be able to grow from it anymore.”³⁷ Zarathustra’s self-overcoming is defined in terms of natural forces, bodies and changes: soil preparation and sowing of seed, transplanting of trees, tending of gardens and crop harvesting, breeding and herding of animals, rolling thunderstorms and ripening fruit.³⁸ The role of the earth in his cultivation as an ethical subject is pervasive.

The Giving Environment: On Bestowing Virtue and Rain

This section examines how perspectivism and animism treat the practice of gift giving as an exchange of perspectives between people and the environment. Zarathustra and the Gurensi both draw upon interdependencies between people and a giving environment to “model” a mode of exchange that provides a more ecological alternative to market exchange. Questions of gift giving, exchange, and reciprocity are central to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*. In “On Free Death” Zarathustra initiates one such exchange. On his way to meet his “free” death, undertaken as a gift to the living, Zarathustra passes a golden ball to his disciples. Yet, before he can die, leaving his disciples indebted to the continual circulation of his gift, they return the gift, drawing their teacher into a series of exchanges that postpone his death:

Zarathustra was delighted with the staff and leaned on it; then he spoke thus to his disciples. “Tell me now: how did gold come to have the highest value? Because it is uncommon and useless and gleaming and mild in its luster; it bestows itself always . . . This is your thirst: to become sacrifices and gifts yourselves, and therefore you thirst to amass all riches in your soul. Insatiably your soul strives for treasures and gems, because your virtue is insatiable in wanting to bestow. You compel all things to and into yourselves, so that they may gush back from your well as the gifts of your love.”³⁹

Gold came to have the highest value, explains Zarathustra, because it is “uncommon and useless and gleaming and mild in its luster.” In other words, gift giving cannot be understood either from the perspective of the price

calculus of market exchange or from the viewpoint of utilitarian and contractual obligations. Gold, like the sun, is a radiant body that “bestows itself always.” The sun is taken as a model of an economy of immense expenditure and excess: “I learned this from the sun when it goes down, the super-rich one: it pours gold into the sea from its inexhaustible wealth—such that even the poorest fisherman rows with *golden* oars!”⁴⁰ Like the sun, Zarathustra’s body is open outward, bestowing his outflows without ranking people, animals, and places. This is a model of giving as squandering that provokes responses from the earth in the form of growth, flowering, and energy.

Unlike the forms of market exchange familiar to us, gift giving is not an exchange of objects or possessions. To give, for Zarathustra, means to give who one is and the stability of entrenched identities rather than what one possesses.⁴¹ Accumulation of wealth is understood, correspondingly, as a growth of spiritual dispositions, and not merely a distribution of material goods: “Insatiably your soul strives for treasures and gems, because your virtue is insatiable in wanting to bestow.” Rather than being a form of unrestricted and disinterested giving without any return, squandering entails its own inflows of renewed sensibility: “You compel all things to and into yourselves, so that they may gush back from your well as the gifts of your love.” One has to allow the wide influx of experience to become organized unconsciously in the human sensorium until a new sensitivity emerges and a reserve of energy can be drawn upon to bestow gifts of generosity and gratitude upon the earth and other humans. When the gift is used, it is not used up: as long as it is passed along it remains abundant.⁴² This is an excess of energy that takes the form of an invitation to engage in the spiritualization of enmity. When Zarathustra bids his disciples to “lose me and find yourselves; and only when you have all denied me will I return to you,” he advocates a squandering and dispersal of disciples. Gift giving entails a pathos of distance between teacher and disciples, which rules out the latter’s self-identification as Zarathustra’s intellectual progeny. Only when the gift moves out of sight can its circulation remain beyond the control of an individual giver or a pair of gift partners. Squandering is compared to the force of an overflowing river—“a blessing and a danger to adjacent dwellers”—that cannot be traced back to an intentional subject or single origin.⁴³

The connections or “contracts” established by such circulation differ from the ties that bind groups organized through centralized power and top-down authority.⁴⁴ A new form of sociality emerges not when a part of oneself is *transferred* to another but when some of the self is *expended* or lavished upon another. This new sociality puts Nietzsche’s apparent pro-mastery rhetoric in a new light: gifts are empowering only if they teach others how to empower themselves and practice active reciprocity. In his conversation with the saint, Zarathustra distinguishes bestowing virtue from giving alms: “I do not give

alms. For that I am not poor enough.”⁴⁵ By giving alms one places the object of charity in a state of indebtedness that reinforces power asymmetries. Such asymmetries are themselves forms of poverty and privation.⁴⁶ The idea is not to become dependent upon those whose gifts you have received, but to tap into an affective economy of abundance as a resource for remaking one’s own virtue and livelihood: “Physician, help yourself: Let that be his best help, that he sees with his own eyes the one who heals himself.”⁴⁷

The gift-giving virtue, says Zarathustra, is an “earthly” virtue.⁴⁸ An ethic that remains “faithful to the earth” cannot simply be known; it must be lived through inflow and outflow. The earth cannot be merely conceptualized; its energies must become infused into being. For Zarathustra, relatedness with the earth, rather than abstract theorization, becomes the crucial foundation upon which the “higher” activities of thinking are predicated. Thinking and acting are co-extensive. This is a relational view of agency: what matters is where and how one stands in oscillating webs of relations.

The centrality of lived experience to Zarathustra’s earth-based thinking highlights a series of resonances between his gift-giving economy and Gurensi economies of reciprocity, which also revolve around a web of lived relationships between people and a giving environment that includes the living, the dead, and the earth. The dead transact with the living as identified ancestors (*yaabeduma*), and not as an anonymous collectivity. The earth (*tiqa*) participates, in turn, as personified and named localities or shrines (*tingana*), in which the ancestors come back to reside with the clan or the village. Three different types of earth shrines can bear the name *tingane*: *yaaba-tia* (ancestral trees); *tingane* proper; and *tinkugere* (land stones or land spirits).

The distinctions between various earth shrines remain fluid. Some elders describe a process of “promotion” of shrines that merges the lifecycles of humans and trees: “when the father dies, he later goes to the ancestor station and becomes an ancestor, *yaaba*, and from *yaaba* he may go to the bush . . . the whole clan refer to you as the *tingane*.⁴⁹ Over the course of several human generations, new trees may spring up around the *yaaba-tia*, transforming it from an ancestral tree into a sacred grove (*tingane*). The older one gets, the more numerous one’s children and grandchildren, and the more prominent an elder becomes as a reference point for the common good and future generations, establishing social identity, authority and obligations.⁵⁰ The return of the ancestors as the proliferating growth of nature binds the continuity of identity and authority to cycles of ecological renewal of *tiqa*. It also troubles Western demarcations between natural, cultural, and supernatural. According to our modern way of thinking, their living elders are honored or paid respect while dead ones are worshipped, a distinction that the Gurensi

do not need. Offering millet beer or a fowl to the *tingane* is no more “religious” than giving it to a living elder.⁵¹

The typical practice of petitioning and sacrificing to earth shrines and the ancestors involves giving gifts, to plead with and persuade the *yaabas* and natural agencies to provide some desired outcome. Before and after each farming season, the *tindaana* (earth priest) performs sacrifices to the *tingana*. These seasonal sacrifices are known respectively as *Naarega* and *Mdan Koya*. *Naarega* involves an offering of the first *pito*, a local brew from early millet set aside by elders during the previous harvest season. The brew is given to the ancestors to thank them for their generosity and to plead for another propitious harvest. Sacrifices are also performed to aid the living in addressing a crisis or the threat of crisis:

When you are sick and open your mouth and call his name, cry and say “ancestral gods heal me,” he will certainly heal you. When one is also in trouble like someone raise a knife after you to kill and you cry to the ancestral Awubugo that help me, he will indeed help you. Now, after helping or saving you, he can ask you to offer a sheep or goat to him.⁵²

Other elders have compared the *tingane* to a welfare officer who looks after people’s well-being, warding off whatever disaster may be afflicting an individual, family or community:

If the *tindaana* is somebody who is also for the welfare of the people, we’ll consult him and he will say: “you bring this because there is a likelihood of a drought coming, there’s likelihood of strong winds coming, so you bring me this so I will be able to block those things from coming.” That’s the *tingane*’s role. An individual can also have problems—maybe they have sleepless nights, ill health—so the *tingane* will say: “you bring me this, I should be able to block the illness from entering your house.”⁵³

It is the *tindaana*’s responsibility to find out why drought, infertility, and illness have occurred and to perform “the necessary sacrifices.” Like Zarathustra, the *Fürsprecher*, the *tindaana* is the “mouthpiece” that communicates ancestors’ perspectives to the living. His duty is to consult the soothsayer and find out what the ancestors and the earth need. If the ancestors say they want a cow, it is the *tindaana* who addresses such needs and sacrifices the cow to the shrine.

There are well-defined customary proceedings for libations and offerings, which are couched in the bodily idiom of the mutually courteous, easy-to-understand everyday intercourse with elders. The ancestral beings and natural agencies to which these offerings are addressed are expected to attend a particular earth shrine or locality. Petitions are never directed towards an

abstract heaven or the sky. In sacrificing to shrines, men squat, addressing the ancestors as if face-to-face on the same level. The tone of address differs from ordinary speech but is similar to that of a customary salutation to an elder when making a request. Heads are bared, voices are quiet, eyes are lowered, and bodily posture is deferential. The petition is always a public and open utterance, launched as much at the company present as at the ancestral powers addressed.⁵⁴ Sometimes it includes a threat to withhold a promised or demanded offering if the desired outcome is not granted. For instance, a *tindaana* may sacrifice raw millet flour without water. The ancestors are denied water: “If you want water you bring rain.”⁵⁵ The public exposure of such agonistic relations can be understood as a way to coerce the ancestors into ethical responsibility to the living that equals the accountability of the latter to the former. According to Meyer Fortes, this strategy never works: “In the long run, death supervenes and this is interpreted as the victory of the ancestors or the Earth over the intractable living.”⁵⁶

Nonetheless, it is taken for granted that the ancestors and the earth will respond to petitions and sacrifices: “cry and say ‘ancestral gods heal me,’ he will *certainly* heal you.” The ancestors will become spiritually present, and even if it turns out that they have not granted one’s request, this would be for reasons that have remained unknown by the petitioner, and not because the ancestors are absent from the occasion.⁵⁷ In effect, when a disaster is interpreted as a punitive or corrective intervention, the ancestors are perceived to have acted rightfully, not arbitrarily. This is because people’s relationship with the earth as reciprocating ancestors is governed by a mutuality of reciprocal obligations. What holds for the ancestors holds reciprocally for their living descendants.

This is consistent with *tindaanas’* and elders’ repeated interpretations of climate change as ancestral retribution for the collective failures of the living to abide by this regime of mutuality of obligations. In our numerous conversations about the changing and unpredictable patterns of rainfall and local weather, *tindaanas*, chiefs, and elders all concurred that climate change is man-made, and not “natural”:

With the pretense of religion they will not forbid, so they start cutting these trees. In the end they wipe out the trees, the ancestors’ trees. The gods are no more there so what is to prevent or bring down the rain? . . . God has given us these things—the trees, everything—and then there are those who felt they are no good and let’s destroy them. . . . If you adhere to the rules of the ancestors . . . we wouldn’t be facing these problems. So it is not natural but it is man-made.⁵⁸

As people continue to “wipe out the trees,” the ancestors’ abodes are being steadily destroyed, reversing customary relations of power and authority. Deforestation forces the ancestors to leave home and to withdraw their

protection for the living. Climate change is interpreted as the product of human failure to reciprocate and hold respectful custody of the gifts bestowed by a generous environment: “It is God that has made those things. Because all of us will look out for the rain. He is giving us the rain and they are not seeing it.”⁵⁹ The adversity of the ancestors is directed towards harmonizing human–environment relations in accordance with the norms of reciprocal obligation that govern the intercourse between the living, the ancestors, and the earth. Like Zarathustra’s gift-giving economy, the elders’ dispositions are predicated upon trust in abundance, which contrasts with modern economies’ fixation on a lust for more. The environment contains enough for human well-being, both Zarathustra and the *tindaana* agree, if social and ethical rules of modesty are followed. It is this attitude towards the earth’s abundance as a gift that itself generates wealth and increases resources: here economic activities start from a premise of a surplus in nature, situating human wants within the earth’s available means.

This is not to say that abundance is unlimited. What the earth gives humans is affected by what humans give to the earth. A give-and-take relationship with the earth acknowledges human interdependence with natural processes. Such gift economies also have a built-in check on commodification: the incommensurability and nonsubstitutability of “goods”—for example, food, *pito*, blood, rainfall, and soothsaying (the *Gurensi*), and teachings and sensibilities (Zarathustra)—ensures that gifts cannot be easily converted into tradable commodities. Resources remain plentiful as long as humans participate in the seasonal cycles of gift giving. They appear scarce when gifts stop circulating and humans begin to convert ancestral trees into firewood and farmland: “In those days who dared to cut the forest without permission? They cut lots of the *tingana* and then you are supposed to leave a certain area within the *tingane*—you don’t farm there. People farm the whole area. It’s all annoying to the *tingane*.”⁶⁰

The punitive and erratic behavior of nature portends the sickness and maladaptation of a transforming social world, in which the advance of Christianity, modernization, and Western education collide with existing forms of authority and belonging:

There are changes now. . . . Usually, they roam in the night—the ancestors . . . just to survey the area and to drive away evil. Now . . . so many churches come into the community—it drives away the *tingane* from roaming in the night. For that matter they also become annoyed and they can cause evil to befall the community. . . . That’s why droughts and whatnot are happening. . . . The youth now, when you tell them this thing is forbidden they say: “Oh, why is it forbidden?” So they ignore them and these are the very things that will happen. Ignoring the taboos by the youth.⁶¹

It is this concatenation of interpretations and the elders' ability to shift back and forth between the competing perspectives of the living and the dead that account for recent weather fluctuations in Northern Ghana. Sometimes whole communities, and especially the present generation of the youth, refuse to acknowledge the authority and jurisdiction vested in parental agencies, channeled through the socio-ecological relations mobilized by Gurensi ancestorhood. Even though the human bodies of parents perish, the authority they wielded—and which enabled them to be both protective and persecutory because this is how parents appear to their children when they exercise authority—persists within the earth-based jurisdiction of the *tingane*. Climate change is thus a contemporary reminder of both the transience of authority and the dangers of opposition to it.⁶²

Rather than being passive recipients of Westernization and the globalization of Western productive forces, the *yaabas'* adversity highlights the extent to which society and nature together continue to exercise influence over production, distribution, and consumption in Northern Ghana. It shows the alternative rationalizations that govern so-called "Third World" societies as they construct their own modernities. Rather than being primary, production here is revealed as one mode of reciprocal exchange between humans and nonhumans. In much of the North, production is conventionally conceived as primary—as in Marx and classical political economy—while exchange and distribution are viewed as consequences of production. In contrast, for both Zarathustra and the Gurensi, a wide variety of exchanges set the enabling condition of production: without proper relations with the earth, no production is possible. The entire economy is best understood as a circulation system in which people, chiefs, *tindaanas*, and ancestors co-participate.⁶³ Economy is refused as an autonomous domain: it is impossible to separate economic life from social life, ecological life, spiritual life, etc. This refusal of economy approximates Zarathustra's existential self-artistry. If Zarathustra or the Gurensi *tindaana* do not act as entrepreneurs, preoccupied with ceaselessly increasing production to acquire profit, it is not because they do not know how to. It is because profit is not the only thing that interests them or they prefer to distribute surplus differently, converting it into spiritual and sensorial resources for addressing new crises of society.

Finally, the conversation we enact between Zarathustra and the earth priest reveals these relations of reciprocal interdependence as *power* relations. There is a mutuality of obligations between the living and the ancestors, but as Fortes observes in the case of the Talensi, these obligations are not equal. Authority takes the form of a debt that mortal humans have to pay to an ever-renewing earth as gift-giving ancestors. The living count on the "dead" to come up with what Thoreau called "the gross necessities of life": health,

prosperity, rains, food, and the fertility of fields and women.⁶⁴ If this relationship appears asymmetrical, it is because what is offered (for example, a calabash of millet flour or a fowl) is more of a token of respect in comparison with what is obtained in return.⁶⁵ Nietzsche's emphasis on agon and struggle reveals such reciprocity between humans and nonhumans as *agonistic reciprocity*. Here the Nietzsche-Gurensi dialogue might contribute to the contemporary debate about a new ethics of intergenerational justice and responsibility, especially with regard to climate change. One of the key challenges of generating such an ethic has been the problem with establishing relationships of reciprocity among successive human generations. African notions of indebtedness to the earth through reciprocating ancestors address this problem and offer a way to generate obligations or debt to the future *as* the past. Zarathustra's agonistic self-overcoming and critique of existential *ressentiment*, in turn, offer another way of receiving nature's perspectives on climate change as something other than ancestral retribution or punishment.

Zarathustra might be speaking to such debates among environmentalists when he says: "Those who care most today ask: 'How are human beings to be preserved?' But Zarathustra is the only one and the first one to ask: 'How shall human being be *overcome*?'"⁶⁶ The idea is to silence the preservation of the human species. Instead, Zarathustra encourages us to strive to cultivate a group of "overmen" who ward off resentment against the fragility of the human condition and rise above the insistence on externalizing collective responsibility and placing it on the otherworldly and on identifying culpable agents to punish every time humans suffer. Here I concur with William Connolly that if there is something admirable in such a rendering of the "overman," it has to be "dismantled as a distinct caste of solitary individuals and folded into the political fabric of late-modern society." The idea is to enlarge it as a voice among us as we appreciate the "intensive entanglement of everyone with everyone else."⁶⁷ A book for anyone and no one.

As preservation and overcoming are now drawn closer together by the global ecological crisis, Zarathustra's overman as a distinct type cannot eliminate from its process of ethical self-formation some of the existing modalities of what it means to be "human" rendered visible by the earth priest. For Connolly, then, the overman becomes refigured into a struggle within the self between the inclination to existential resentment and punishment, on the one hand, and gratitude for the abundance of the earth that rises above this tendency, on the other. The dialogue with the earth priest, I think, can be understood as an ethico-political strategy that shifts the center of gravity from such solitary figures to society. It can fold Nietzschean agonism into the fabric of everyday life by attending to the more-than-human character of the latter while harmonizing its inexorable struggles. The dialogue affords a break both

with the spirit of Nietzsche's overman and with African identifications of indebtedness with punishment in order to advance and sustain an intergenerational ethics of collective responsibility and climate justice.

Conclusion

This article has staged a series of encounters between political theory and ethnography in order to explore new forms of experiential exchange and interspecies ethics. Such ethics of reciprocity, I have argued, are not merely relevant for African villages. The dialogue between Nietzsche's perspectivism and African animism prompts us to reflect on the evolving ways in which people have understood and related to the earth and "natural resources" and on the ways in which the earth and "resources" have responded and continue to respond in the Anthropocene.

I have sought to prioritize the everyday situations and face-to-face interactions between people and the environment that form the texture of lived experience, and thus to pursue political thinking from the earth up. While it is certainly edifying for environmental political theory to enter into conversations with the Greeks or Nietzsche, the global ecological crisis also makes it critical to learn more about the ecological practices of those who seem most distant and "alien" to us in the world in which we presently live. By sojourning among them it becomes possible to explore the value not merely of abstract knowledge *of* the other but of thinking *with* the other, be it the African earth priest or the baobab tree that responds to his pleas. Here the ethnographic method can be understood not only as a set of interdisciplinary research techniques that we have to acquire but also as a "commonplace body of social skills we already possess."⁶⁸ Ethnography as a technique of thinking enables us to take part in a web of ongoing intersections between humans and nonhumans by using one's body as other species do. It is a way of trying on more-than-human perspectives and identities, and of displacing anthropocentric habits of perception. It allows us to adopt a view from in-between, reducible neither to one's own perspective nor to those of others.⁶⁹

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Notes

1. Gurensi Chief and Elders, Interview by author, Jacqueline Ignatova and Christopher Azaare, December 12, 2012.
2. I build on Stephen Gudeman's insights about African economic models of nature as a reciprocating ancestor. See Stephen Gudeman, *Economics as Culture: Models and Metaphors of Livelihood* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986), 90–109. I am also indebted to Nurit Bird-David for the term "giving environment," which she uses to describe the economic metaphors of the Nayaka people. See Nurit Bird-David, "The Giving Environment: Another Perspective on the Economic System of Gatherer-Hunters," *Current Anthropology* 31, no. 2 (April 1990): 189–96.
3. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 65.
4. *Ibid.*
5. C. J. Jung, *Nietzsche's Zarathustra: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1934-1939 by C.G. Jung*, ed. James L. Jarrett (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 869, 903–4.
6. Jung, *Nietzsche's Zarathustra*, 870.
7. Lewis Hyde, *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 41–43.
8. Elizabeth Croll and David Parkin, "Cultural Understandings of the Environment," in *Bush Base: Forest Farm*, ed. Elizabeth Croll and David Parkin (London: Routledge, 1992), 11–36.
9. Fikret Berkes, *Sacred Ecology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 287.
10. Let me address the terminological choice of turning to "animism" to characterize the Gurensi mode of political theorizing. Rather than "Nietzschean and Gurensi perspectivism," I prefer "animism" because the latter concept accentuates key contrasts between the Gurensi and Nietzschean practices of theorizing. First, the web of personalized interactions between humans and nonhumans in Northern Ghana interweaves the earth's agencies with the agencies of specific ancestors,

families, and clans into relationships of kinship. Whereas Zarathustra adopts perspectivism as active intersections between different processes, in a universe that is open and not predesigned for the human species in the last instance, the earth priest tends toward an image of world that would head toward beneficent harmony if we would only lighten our ecological footprint. These two images of the world intersect, but they do not always blend together. Where the earth priest sees ancestral punishment, Zarathustra sees an innocence of worldly becoming that “we” often interpret in ways that demand somebody to punish.

Second, in addition to bearing an irreducible sociality and historicity, African animism actively resists “the goal of Weberian rationalization and secularization” by continually spiritualizing the object world (Garuba, “Explorations in Animist Materialism,” 283). The discourses and practices usually associated with modernity and a rationalization of nature lead instead to a continual re-enchantment rather than a disenchantment of the world. Here I concur with Harry Garuba that animism’s encounters with Western modernity are governed by logic of *inclusion* rather than exclusion: its assimilative reach elides binaries and contradictions in our usual sense of these words. Upon arrival in Accra, Toyotas are “baptized” and “tropicalized,” and then receive the blessings of the Ga priest or the elders’ prayers. In the Upper East of Ghana Western medicine, clinical expertise and blood transfusions are hailed by the spirits as a welcome complement to the chief of medicine’s diagnostic portfolio. Climate change has become increasingly harmonized with *tindaanas’* strategies to expound and address famine and disasters at the same time that chiefs integrate modernization and development into their “traditional” roles and duties. That this predilection to continual re-enchantment is not simply a matter of religiosity has been underscored also by Wole Soyinka, who describes animist thought as “an attitude of philosophical accommodation” that emerges out of the code on which many African worldviews are based. See Wole Soyinka, *Myth, Literature, and the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 52–54.

Third, at the register of philosophical thinking, these practices of spiritualization and re-enchantment involve a corollary practice of materialization of abstract categories. African animism accords a physical, often animate material aspect to what others in the West may consider abstract ideas (Garuba, “Explorations in Animist Materialism,” 272–74). For instance, the chief of medicine removes a pot of pito planted in one’s body that eternally demands to be filled up, rather than treat alcoholism. Here “animism,” rather than “perspectivism,” seems to be better suited to express such practices of giving living dimensions to abstract ideas.

There is no perfect way to deal with this terminological issue, reminds us Viveiros de Castro in his book *Cannibal Metaphysics*. Viveiros de Castro chooses “perspectivism” to characterize Amerindian thought and the multiplicity of perspectives in the Amazon that view nonhumans as human persons who are distinct from “human” humans because their bodies are different. Amerindian perspectivism’s relationship to other “ontologies” or “modes of identification” such as “animism,” “analogism,” and “naturalism” is a hotly debated issue within

anthropology's recent "ontological turn," whose elaboration is beyond the scope of this article. See Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's *Cannibal Metaphysics*, trans. Peter Skafish (Minneapolis: Univocal, 2014) and Philippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

11. Tim Ingold, "Culture and the Perception of the Environment," in *Bush Base: Forest Farm*, ed. Elizabeth Croll and David Parkin (London: Routledge, 1992), 39–56.
12. Farah Godrej, *Cosmopolitan Political Thought: Method, Practice, Discipline* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 123.
13. Some of these themes and engagements are developed in my essay "African Orature as Ecophilosophy: Tuning in to the Voices of the Land" (*GeoHumanities*, Forum on Attunement, May 2016), which explores the orature of the Gurensi and Boosi people of Ghana in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's idea of "minor literature." The dialogue between these two "minor" traditions of thought aims to advance a new model of agency, authority, and collectivity, in which politics reveals itself to be an "ecological" process involving the conjoint action of the living, the ancestors, and the land.
14. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).
15. Rane Willerslev, "Laughing at the Spirits in North Siberia: Is Animism Being Taken too Seriously?," *E-flux* 36 (07/2012). For "classic" accounts of animism see Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (London: J. Murray, 1871) and Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen E. Fields (New York: New Press, 1995). Notable examples of the "new animism" approach include Philippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); and Laura Rival, "The Materiality of Life: Revisiting the Anthropology of Nature in Amazonia," *Indiana* 29 (2012): 127–43.
16. Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), xvii, xxi.
17. Eduardo Batalha Viveiros de Castro, *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds* (Chicago: HAU Books, 2016).
18. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage, 1968), no. 636, 339–40.
19. William Connolly, *A World of Becoming* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 34–35.
20. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, no. 678, 359–60.
21. Ibid., no. 681, 361.
22. Ibid., no. 643, 342. See also Alphonso Lingis, "The Will to Power," in *The New Nietzsche: Contemporary Styles of Interpretation*, ed. David B. Allison (New York: Delta, 1977), 41–44.
23. Lingis, "The Will to Power," 51.

24. Ibid., 41. “Pathos of distance” is Nietzsche’s term for the creative tension of competing perspectives whereby each maintains a posture of respect for the adversary, partly because the relationship reveals the contingent orientations of both.
25. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, no. 540, 291.
26. Nietzsche’s point of view here resonates with Viveiros de Castro’s “perspectivism,” a term he uses to describe the relational ontologies of Amerindian societies. See Eduardo Batalha Viveiros de Castro, “Exchanging Perspectives: The Transformation of Objects into Subjects in Amerindian Ontologies,” *Common Knowledge* 10, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 463–84.
27. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, no. 481, 267.
28. Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, I, 13, 45.
29. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 9.
30. See Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, no. 636, 340.
31. Lingis, “The Will to Power,” 39.
32. Harry Garuba, “Explorations in Animist Materialism: Notes on Reading/Writing African Literature, Culture, and Society,” *Public Culture* 15, no. 2 (2003): 267.
33. Marilyn Strathern, *Property, Substance and Effect: Anthropological Essays on Persons and Things* (London: Athlone Press, 1999), 239.
34. Igor Kopytoff, “Ancestors as Elders in Africa,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 41, no. 2 (April 1971): 133, 139.
35. Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo Batalha. “Supernature: under the gaze of the other,” *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, Masterclass Series 1 (2012): 136.
36. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Prologue, 6.
37. Ibid., 9.
38. Graham Parkes, “Staying Loyal to the Earth: Nietzsche as an Ecological Thinker,” in *Nietzsche’s Futures*, ed. John Lippit (New York: St. Martin’s, 1999), 171.
39. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 55–56.
40. Ibid., 159.
41. Vanessa Lemm, “Justice and Gift-Giving in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*,” in *Nietzsche’s Thus Spoke Zarathustra: Before Sunrise*, ed. James Luchte (London: Continuum, 2008), 171.
42. Hyde, *The Gift*, 21.
43. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 57.
44. Hyde, *The Gift*, 16, 84.
45. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 4.
46. Gary Shapiro, “The Metaphysics of Presents: Nietzsche’s Gift, the Debt to Emerson, Heidegger’s Values,” in *The Logic of the Gift: Toward an Ethic of Generosity*, ed. Alan D. Shrift (New York: Routledge, 1997), 281.
47. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 58.
48. Ibid., 25.
49. Gurensi Chief and Elders, Interview by author, Jacqueline Ignatova and Christopher Azaare, December 12, 2012.

50. See also Wyatt Macgaffey, *Chiefs, Priests, and Praise-Singers: History, Politics, and Land Ownership in Northern Ghana* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 80.
51. Macgaffey, *Chiefs, Priests, and Praise-Singers*, 79–81. See also Michael Singleton, “Speaking to the Ancestors: Religion as Interlocutory Interaction,” *Anthropos* 104 (2009): 311–22.
52. Gurensi Tindaana, Interview by author, Jacqueline Ignatova, and Christopher Azaare, November 10, 2012.
53. Gurensi Chief and Elders, Interview by author, Jacqueline Ignatova, and Christopher Azaare, December 12, 2012.
54. Meyer Fortes, *Religion, Morality and the Person: Essays on Tallensi Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 23–26.
55. Member of Tindaanas’ Association, Interview by author, December 16, 2002.
56. Fortes, *Religion, Morality and the Person*, 29.
57. *Ibid.*, 31.
58. Gurensi Chief and Elders, Interview by author and Christopher Azaare, September 21, 2012.
59. Gurensi Tindaana, Interview by author, Jacqueline Ignatova, and Christopher Azaare, October 04, 2012.
60. Gurensi Chief and Elders, Interview by author, Jacqueline Ignatova, and Christopher Azaare, December 12, 2012.
61. *Ibid.*
62. See Fortes, *Religion, Morality and the Person*, 66–83.
63. Gudeman, *Economics as Culture*, 101.
64. Henry D. Thoreau, *Walden* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 11–12.
65. Singleton, “Speaking to the Ancestors,” 320.
66. Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 232.
67. William Connolly, *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 186–88.
68. Michael Jackson, *Lifeworlds: Essays in Existential Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 251–69.
69. *Ibid.*, 256.

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